

REMARKS

Please reconsider the present application in view of the above amendments and the following remarks. Applicant thanks the Examiner for indicating that claims 11-17 are allowable and for indicating that claims 3, 4, 6, 10, and 19 contain allowable subject matter.

Disposition of Claims

Claims 1-20 were pending in the present application. By way of this reply, claim 6 has been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer. Thus, claims 1-5 and 7-20 are now pending in the present application. By way of this reply, claims 3, 4, and 10 have been amended to be in independent form. Claims 1, 11, and 18 remain independent. The remaining claims depend, directly or indirectly, from claims 1, 11, and 18.

Claim Amendments

Independent claim 1 has been amended to incorporate the limitations of now-cancelled claim 6. No new matter has been added by way of this amendment. Accordingly, as claim 6 was indicated as containing allowable subject matter (*see* Office Action of June 2, 2005, page 4), amended independent claim 1 is now allowable.

Previously dependent claim 3 has been rewritten in independent form including all the limitations of any base and intervening claims. No new matter has been added by way of this amendment. Accordingly, as claim 3 was indicated as containing allowable subject matter (*see* Office Action of June 2, 2005, page 4), amended claim 3 is now allowable.

Previously dependent claim 4 has been rewritten in independent form including all the limitations of any base and intervening claims. No new matter has been added by way of this

amendment. Accordingly, as claim 4 was indicated as containing allowable subject matter (*see* Office Action of June 2, 2005, page 4), amended claim 4 is now allowable.

Previously dependent claim 10 has been rewritten in independent form including all the limitations of any base and intervening claims. No new matter has been added by way of this amendment. Accordingly, as claim 10 was indicated as containing allowable subject matter (*see* Office Action of June 2, 2005, page 4), amended claim 10 is now allowable.

Independent claim 18 has been amended to recite that the flexible means is at least partially embedded in the support means. No new matter has been added by way of this amendment as support for this amendment may be found, for example, in Figure 7A.

Rejection(s) Under 35 U.S.C § 102

Claims 1, 2, 5, 7-9, 18, and 20 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,501,658 issued to Pearson et al. (hereinafter "Pearson"). For the reasons set forth below, this rejection is respectfully traversed.

As discussed above, independent claim 1 has been amended to incorporate allowable subject matter and is thus allowable. Dependent claims 2, 5, and 7-9 are allowable for at least the same reasons. Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejections of claims 1, 2, 5, and 7-9 is respectfully requested.

Independent claim 18 has been amended to recite that the flexible means is at least partially embedded in the support means. This limitation is similar to that indicated as being allowable subject matter in now-canceled claim 6. Moreover, Pearson is silent as to such a limitation. Thus, amended independent claim 18 is allowable over Pearson. Dependent claims

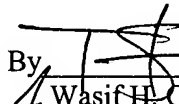
19 and 20 are allowable for at least the same reasons. Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejections of claims 18 and 20 is respectfully requested.

Conclusion

Applicant believes this reply is fully responsive to all outstanding issues and places the present application in condition for allowance. Applicant believes the included amendments do not require a new search, or at least simplify issues for appeal, and accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests entry and favorable consideration thereof. If this belief is incorrect, or other issues arise, the Examiner is encouraged to contact the undersigned or his associates at the telephone number listed below. Please apply any charges not covered, or any credits, to Deposit Account 50-0591 (Reference Number 03226.387001; P9280).

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Respectfully submitted,

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